

CONVENTION HALL DEBATE

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A VOICE FROM THE AUDIENCE

REV. MR. JOHNSON: (Continuing)—The bigger the criminal, the less he is bothered, the less he is punished mentally for his deed and neither do we find it in estate. Why some of the biggest libertines, some of the greatest debauches in the world are millionaires while some of the best people in all the world live in penury and want. Now, if you can think of a government whose God is just, whose rule is just, and you dare not say God is anything but just, then, if there is no way of administering punishment equitably in this life and it must be equitable or God would be unjust, then there is the argument for future punishment from the standpoint of common sense and the Bible to justify the idea of future punishment—the idea of hell. I said that Russellism was serving the devil and not God for the very reason that it is saying to man, there is no hell—you are not immortal—you die as the horse dies and the Scriptures have been cited showing that there is no difference in man and beast; that man has no pre-eminence over the beast and my worthy opponent thought he said so much but it is true that it relates to this life when one dies. He is like the beast so far as life is concerned but we have too much Bible and too much common sense to admit there is no difference between man and beast with reference to future life. (Applause). Now, you let the average man believe that there is no place of punishment for him—no punishment for him despite what he does and you talk about Tulsa being "Hell's Half Acre" and it will become "Hell's Whole Acre"; you talk about murders and killing and everything else that goes on in Tulsa and I confess to you that if you can get the people of Tulsa to substitute the teachings of the International Bible Students' Association, that there is no hell and no punishment and you will make Tulsa at once a place unfit to live in. It is a fact that the idea of hell, the idea of punishment is the greatest restraint on man. We have not yet got to the place where we are willing to do right just because it is right. Lots of us are doing right though, but we are doing it because we recognize there is to be a reckoning. Every man must give an account to God for the deeds done in the body and because we look forward to that reckoning, because we must meet a Judge that cannot be bribed—we shall meet a Judge who will be absolutely fair—when we meet a Judge who administers justice impartially, because we look forward to that time we are careful about what we are doing now. I guess I had better save this until I come back, but I will start on it now.

The trouble with Russellism is they left out three agencies—they forgot man is free. They seem to have overlooked it and because he is free, he is responsible. If he is responsible, he must give an account to somebody somewhere but they don't take into consideration his account and his freedom and therefore they look over the responsibility and they say, no matter how degrading, no matter how fallen, no matter how mean, he is going to have another chance and he is going to get that in the resurrection. He is resurrected. The word itself means that the thing that goes down must come up but they say that thing that goes down, stays and something else come up. (Applause)

(And now, at this time the Rev. Johnson having concluded his remarks for the time, the following proceedings are had.)

MR. SMITHERMAN: Mr. Hill will now take twenty minutes for rebuttal. (Applause)

MR. HILL: I don't need twenty minutes—about five minutes will do me. I am all out of fix—I have nothing to answer and don't want to go into my conclusion. I want to say with all earnestness that there is no wonder the poor people are in such gross darkness concerning God's plan, when our best educated college ministers have so little of the light of God's great plan. (Applause) Now, I say this in all candor and as a big broad minded friend, Rev. Johnson is in earnest but he is very unfortunate I wish to say before God and you people as not having a single idea of God's great knowledge and the plan of salvation. Why do I say that? I used to be the same way, but by the grace of God, I am permitted to see His plan and tell His truth. Now, I don't want to say anything more than—if we had time, just a week-end to argue on this matter, it would be very beautiful; there are a whole lot of things I would like to talk to him about but we are discussing the great plan of Salvation in the first place, he called your attention to a Scripture in Mary 16, I believe, about the 16th verse, about "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned." I want to say that I am very much surprised that an intelligent educated minister does not know from the ninth verse in this Chapter, it is not the Bible and is recognized by all the scholars as interpolation. (Applause) It is acknowledged by every person that knows the Bible and all Greek scholars—he does not have to dispute with me, that the ninth verse, from the first verse to the ninth

verse only is recognized as genuine from the manuscript, so I wave back (Laughter). Now, he quoted Matthew 10:28 to prove that or to give you the impression the soul could not be destroyed and I was going to spot him good but he came around and read the other but read it first and did not give you the thought he read only a part of that. Fear not them that can destroy the body but cannot destroy the soul. I am not quoting the exact words but the substance—but fear him that can destroy both soul and body in Gehenna. What is the thought? Showing that the soul can be destroyed and that is what the Lord wanted men to understand that, according to God's plan, through the sacrifice of Jesus, man was going to have a resurrection and a trial for life. Man could destroy this present feeble body but he could not destroy that chance—man has to live again. Man could not do that, destroy one's chance, but God Himself (interrupted with applause)—could destroy this life, feeble as it is and his chance for a resurrection if he was one of those whose eyes had become opened to the plan of salvation and then willingly and intelligently denied the Lord—he would be of that class—the Lord warned them.

Now, I am just going to say right here and stop—I will leave the rest of my statement because I don't like talking to-night on account of a little physical inability. The subject is accept the teachings of the International Bible Students in the place of the teachings of the Church denominations. And you talk about freedom—there is no freedom except among the International Bible Students. They are bound to God alone and all they do is upon the altar of sacrifice and I want to say here that those two hundred thousand ministers did not feed at the International Bible Students' table. The International Bible Students do not have a horde of preachers to support; neither have they got the world strewn from end to end with half-finished and bob-tailed churches; they have no such responsibility as that. This remark is not calculated to cast any reflection but it is the solemn truth. If there is no objection, I will stop right here. I will close it. (Applause)

(Now at this time, the applause having subsided, the following proceedings are had.)

MR. SMITHERMAN: Rev. Johnson will close his side of the question in a thirty minutes' talk. (Applause)

REV. JOHNSON: I want to give my opponent credit for having some conscience. He started to say a bigger one than he started and he stopped. Now, he attempted to disprove what I said and what I said was simply what the Scriptures say: "that we should fear Him who can destroy the soul as well as the body but 'destroy' simply means that God has the power to cast that soul in hell because it says, destroy both soul and body in hell, body in the grave and the soul in the other place. He said that the International Bible Students' Association has no long string of bob-tailed churches and got a lot of applause for the statement, but I want to say that is to the credit of the Church Denominations. The reason the International Bible Students' Association has so much money to give my worthy opponent to publish long articles in the newspaper every week and to rent the hall and pay the stenographer and all that is because they are just centering it in certain places and he has plenty of it. (Applause)

Now, I want to ask the question, brothers and sisters, what is the International Bible Students' Association doing for the good of the world? How many orphanages has the International Bible Students' Association established? (interrupted by voices from the audience)

A VOICE FROM THE AUDIENCE: None.

REV. MR. JOHNSON: (Continuing) How many hospitals with free wards for those who are unable to pay are maintained by the International Bible Students' Association? How many rescue missions in the large cities to save the green country girl and the green farm girl as they enter these cities, from designing men to get them out of the things into which they have fallen and been entrapped and giving them a chance for life and respectability—(interrupted by a voice from the audience)

A VOICE FROM THE AUDIENCE: That's true.

REV. MR. JOHNSON: (Continuing)—How many schools with scholarships for those who cannot pay are being maintained by the International Bible Students' Association? What is the International Bible Students' Association doing with its money and doing with its brain? The one thing I do say they are doing—that the International Bible Students' Association is doing is to cripple the influence of the church. (interrupted by voice from audience)

A VOICE FROM THE AUDIENCE: That's true. (Applause)

REV. JOHNSON: The churches have built all the schools, all the Christian schools; the churches have built them. All the hospitals with free wards in them have been built by the church; the International Bible Students' Association is not furnishing them. The churches are furnishing missionaries to do this big rescue work in the big cities. The churches are the instituting that are preaching patriotism to the American youth

while the International Bible Students are saying, this is God's plan, no use in doing anything. If every body had believed what the International Bible Students' Association teaches they would not have been a man to go to war. (Applause) I make no mistake about that. (continued applause) The big men in the institution got put in jail (continued applause) and the reason my worthy opponent did not get put in jail was he was not big enough. (Applause and laughter)

The International Bible Students would close all the churches and in doing that, it would call from the foreign field every minister who has gone to carry the gospel of Christ to those who know it not. The Lord Jesus Christ said, "go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. (Applause) The International Bible Students' Association says there is no use in going—there is no use n going, because God is working out His "Great Plan."

A VOICE FROM THE AUDIENCE: Yes. (Applause)

REV. MR. JOHNSON: (Continuing) And your preaching will not do any good and I am surprised that educated ministers know so little about "God's great plan."

A VOICE FROM THE AUDIENCE: Yes, "great plan."

REV. MR. JOHNSON: (Continuing) Listen—there is no need of persuading men from sin—God is going to give them a chance after they leave here and because of that there is no need of talking to them now. The International Bible Students would destroy the influence of the Christian Church in the world and I don't know anything that institution would do that would please the devil more.

A VOICE FROM THE AUDIENCE: That is the truth. (Applause)

REV. MR. JOHNSON: (Continuing) The thing that has given the devil concern is the Church with a Divinely called and appointed ministry, that is willing to make sacrifice and build "bob-tailed" churches, if you please, that the poor may have the gospel preached to them.

A VOICE FROM THE AUDIENCE: Yes.

REV. MR. JOHNSON: (Continuing) The International Bible Students' Association is serving the devil because it wants to cripple every good thing that is being done against the devil. Who are the people that would be glad if the International Bible Students' Association could prove there is no hell? Who are the people that would be glad: The good people? Would the people who are practicing the Golden Rule feel the greatest relief or would it be the people who are practicing anything but the Golden Rule that would feel relieved? Who are the people that would be anxious for my opponent to prove his contention tonight that there is no hell? They are the people that believe if the churches are right that there is no chance for them and for that reason they want the doctrine of the International Bible Students' Association proved so that they may not have to live under the consciousness that there is a wrath to come.

The International Bible Students' Association dethrones Christ and puts an angel in His place. You know I have been reading a little on the doctrine of Russellism and you don't know how surprised I was when I ran across this and these words of Mr. Russell: "Our Redeemer existed as a spirit being before he was made flesh and dwelt among men. At that time, as well as subsequently, he was properly known as God, a mighty one, as chief of angels and next to the Father. He was known as the Archangel (highest angel or messenger) whose name was Michael and whose name signifies 'who as God' or 'God's representative.' You will find this in the Bible Studies, Volume Five, Page Eighty-four. What saith the Scriptures now on the same subject? (Quoting) "His name shall be called Wonderful," Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Does that sound like he was an Archangel? Just a big man in the Kingdom, something separate from God? "In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, word, and the word was with God, opponent will tell you that "word" means Christ, so he was in the beginning—He was with God and He was God, yet Russellism says He was an angel.

"For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the God-head bodily." Those other references were Isaiah 9:6 and John, 1st Chapter, 1st Verse. "They shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, 'God with us.'" Matthew 1:23.

Now, don't you know it is libeling Christ, it is dishonoring the Christ to dethrone Him and put an angel in His place, to make He and Michael one, but this is the doctrine of Russellism. This International Bible Students' Association would have you substitute that for the Church, Orthodox Christianity. Then, you must admit that Christ was not of the God-head but that He was subordinate, He was Michael, in substituting the doctrines of the International Bible Students' Association, you will have to swallow this too, Christ's body was not resurrected—that is what it teaches.

Studies in the Scriptures, Volume Two, page one hundred fifty-five, says, "We know nothing about what became of it (His body) whether it was dissolved into gases—no one knows." Again, in Volume One,

page two hundred thirty, he says, "His human existence ended on the cross." Volume Five, page four hundred fifty-four says, "It was necessary, not only that the man Christ Jesus should die, but just necessary that the man Christ Jesus should stay dead." Volume Five, page four hundred sixty-six, says, "The man Christ Jesus suffered for us death in the most absolute sense of the word everlasting destruction." Observe, please, Russellism says we know not what became of His body the angel knew not and said, "He is not here—He is risen as He said." (Applause) Are you going to believe Mr. Russell and the International Bible Students' Association or the angel? Interrupted by voice from the audience.

A VOICE FROM THE AUDIENCE: The angel.

REV. MR. JOHNSON: (Continuing) The Disciples knew for they said, "The Lord is risen indeed and hath appeared to Simon." Luke 24:34. Paul knew and he said, "He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve. After that he was seen of about five hundred brethren at once after that he was seen of James and of the Apostles and, last of all, He was seen of me also, as one born out of due time." (Interrupted by voice from the audience)

A VOICE FROM THE AUDIENCE: Um huh.

REV. MR. JOHNSON: (Continuing) But Mr. Russell says, "We do not know what became of the body."

Well, now, in the face of these Scriptures, Mr. Russell had to get up some kind of explanation and what did he get up? He says that body that was buried did not rise—did not resurrect—his humanity stopped at the Cross and in all His appearances He created a new body and clothes for the occasion. Now, that means He did a lot of creating of bodies; He had a "Corporal Guard"—created new bodies for all of His appearances when He appeared the first time at the grave and on the way and in the upper room and when He appeared and dispelled the doubtings of Thomas and when He ascended and all were looking at Him go up; all of that means also—that Jesus was bluffing that Jesus was fooling the folks; making them believe that when He went to Thomas and showed him His hands and Thomas said, "My Lord and God" that that was not body that was pierced on the cross that was not the Christ nailed to the Cross—that was just one Jesus made for the occasion. Then, he fooled Thomas and Thomas should have continued doubting. According to Russellism He fooled Thomas and played a base hypocrite. Are you going to believe that? Are you going to substitute these teachings for the doctrines of Orthodox Christianity? I am sure you will not.

Russellism teaches that the gospel is not for the whole world. Here is what Mr. Russell says on this subject, just to prove it—"The object and purpose of the gospel everywhere, not to the Jews only, but to every people can easily be demonstrated to all who have faith in God. To claim that God intended the gospel to convert the world and to know that it has done so, is to destroy faith in God and to destroy hope in any glorious outcome to the Divine plan of salvation; for those who claim that God intended the preachings of the gospel to accomplish the world's conversion must admit that it has accomplished no such purpose, and if God's plan has been a failure for eighteen centuries, what hope could any one have that it would be a success."

Bible Students' Monthly, Volume Six, Number Six. Following that same reasoning he would say to the Black man in the dark ages of slavery, for two hundred and forty years; let's say two hundred years from freedom, he would say now you have been a slave for two hundred years and you are still a slave and you are not free—it that not proof you never will be free? That argument would be just as sound as Mr. Russell has said with reference to the salvation of the world, because men have not been saved universally then, the whole thing is false and must be explained in some way, but the Bible says "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation and he that believeth shall be saved and he that believeth not shall be damned." Why say go and preach to everybody if only a few can be saved? Why did that? Why did Jesus make such an unreasonable proposition and put such a big job on his followers when it was not necessary—when God did not intend to do it?

We are told that the Bible does not mean what it says with reference to the judgment. If you read the Tulsa Star and the Oklahoma Sun each week for some time now you will see over the signature of my worthy opponent under the caption, "Then End of the World Has Come"—(Laughter) and Men Now Living Will Never Die and wants him to believe it. Now, this old Millennium Dawn has been popping up every once in a while since the first century. Somebody has come up with it every century and there has been a group of people who have been preaching it and Mr. Russell, the father of the International Bible Students' Association, said the end of this world was coming in 1874, but it didn't. (Laughter) And so he studied some more and he figured again—went back guessing at what Daniel meant by his

times and so on, and he figured and figured and brought it down to October, 1914—that is certainly the time. After 1914 came and while there was no end, Mr. Russell had to make an explanation and so he said that the world has ended, you just don't know it—(Applause) and he goes on to explain what is meant by the end of the world and his explanation does anything but coincide with Holy Writ. John 14:2-3. "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." Now, those are the words of Jesus—I am going. He said and I am going for the purpose of preparing a place for you and if I go and prepare that place I will come back and get you. That is what Jesus said. The International Bible Students' Association says that is not so—it is not that way at all—Jesus don't know. Instead of going off and preparing a place for us and getting us and taking us to it, He is coming back here where we are and make this place Heaven and He is going to stay here one hundred years and all these bad folks, all these people who don't try to do right are going to be resurrected and given another chance and they are going to be resurrected just as slowly as Adam was when he was made and he was created and if they don't make good, if they sin, He will not punish them for it—He is too good to punish anybody; He will not punish them, but he will cut them off, annihilate them and therefore they will be punished for what they have done because they will have no existence but, we are told in the Scripture Jesus is coming like he left. Acts 1:11—"Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into Heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into Heaven, shall come in like manner as ye have seen Him go up into Heaven."

Now, if He is coming back in like manner as He went away and is coming—the coming of Jesus is coincident with the end of the world, then why has not somebody seen Him if the end of the world is here, where is He hiding? We are told by the angel who consoled us when He left that He was coming back and He was going to come just like He went.

Now, friends, I want to just say this concluding word—I am told I have only two or three minutes and I want to say this: That if you adopt the teachings of Russellism you give man license to do as he pleases; you give every man license to kill if he wants to and debauch if he wants to—not only himself but then he can influence you—turn this world loose—passion upon passion, man without any regard for the welfare of his brother man. You turn the world loose in that condition of sinfulness as we can hardly imagine it because of the fact that we have the restraint that goes with the consciousness that we shall be somewhere in the next world in this body.

We are here to ask as my last word, what about the International Bible Students' Association? What about my good friend who has opposed me in this debate? I imagine as soon as you have heard the argument on both sides that the best you can say for it will be what the man said about the gobbler but he has lost his strut. (Applause)

(And now at this time Rev. Johnson having concluded his part of the debate, the audience starts up and sings the song entitled "All Hail the power of Jesus' Name," afterwards the following proceedings are had.)

MR. SMITHERMAN: Mr. Hill now will close the debate. (Applause)

MR. HILL: The more I hear from the college men about the Bible, the more I am inclined to the belief that these seminars should be wiped out of existence. (Applause) I mean that and no more; they mean alright but Oh! what mess and muddle they have gotten the world into. (Applause) I have no time to take up to analyze all the points that my opponent attempted to make about his statement with reference to the man Christ Jesus shows that he has no knowledge whatever of philosophy of the ransom. The perfect body of the man Christ Jesus was given for the perfect man Adam. My opponent does not know the difference between the humanity of Jesus Christ and Him as a Spirit Being. (Applause) My opponent knows nothing of the characteristic qualities of an angel and a Spirit Being. The Lord Jesus appeared to Abraham. One of the qualities of a Spirit Being is to take the human body when it is necessary and dematerialize. That was the condition of the Lord Jesus Christ after the resurrection; that perfect human body had to go; it does not go for one thousand days and it is not Jesus any more. (Applause). That sacrifice could not have been made if the man Christ Jesus was not given up absolutely.

Now I want to say here, the Lord had in mind these blind teachers at the very time. (Applause) and I will use the Lord's word. My opponent used Brother Russell's words but I will use the Lord's word—how the Lord speaks of them (Applause) these who claim to be His Watchmen—listen what he Lord says: "His watchmen are blind"—I want to say this is Isaiah 56th chapter, 10th, 11th and 12th verses—"His watchmen are blind; they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs they cannot bark (Applause) "Sleeping, lying down, living to slumber." Ye are greedy dogs (Applause) which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand." (Applause) "They all look

to their own way (Their denomination) everyone for his gain from his quarter." (Applause) "Come ye say they, I will fetch wine and we will fill ourselves with strong drink (strong doctrine) and tomorrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant." I think you will agree with me when I say that all of this horde of two hundred thousand and better preachers claim to represent the Lord and get the people in confusion, are all pretty good feeders. You don't have that "horde" on your hands if you are an International Bible Student but without going into these things I want to say in conclusion—there are many things I would like to say but will be a waste of time (interrupted by Mr. Smitherman)

MR. SMITHERMAN: (To Mr. Hill) You have thirty minutes.

MR. HILL: Just at this time I wish to make what might be termed by some an awful statement. I charge the Church Denominations are in league with the Devil blind and misrepresent God's character and plan. This charge is made against the Denominations and not against the individuals. We will now listen to both sides for a moment: God and the International Bible Students on the one side and the devil and the Denominations on the other side. (Applause)

God tells us that the wages of sin is death; Romans 6:23; that disobedience to his law brings death Genesis 2:17; that the soul that sinneth it shall die Ezekiel 18:4; that when a person dies he is unconscious has no memory cannot speak, breathe, think cannot work, has no feelings and knows nothing. Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6:10 Psalms 6:5, 115:17; 104:29; 146:4; the International Bible Students are teaching the same thing. But on the other hand, the devil says, ye shall not surely die, he is then more alive than ever. The Church Denominations are teaching the same old lie.

God tells us that the literal earth abideth forever—Ecclesiastes 1:4; that he formed it to be inhabited—Isaiah 45:18; that he gave the earth to the children of men—Psalms 115:16. The International Bible are telling the people the same thing. The devil, through his cunning and blinding influence, is telling the people that the earth is to be burned up. The Denominations are teaching the same old thing, that the earth is to be burned up.

God tells us that He will establish a Kingdom here upon this earth; that His Kingdom shall break in pieces and consume all the beastly kingdoms of the earth; that His Kingdom will stand forever—Daniel 2:44; that when His Kingdom is a operation, all the dead, both of the just and unjust, will be resurrected, for the purpose of giving life everlasting to the just and giving the unjust an opportunity, through obedience, to gain life—John 5:28-29. The International Bible Students are teaching the same thing to those who will hear. (Applause)

The devil, through his tact and cunning, is teaching the people of the world that God's Kingdom has long been established in the world and that it is the duty of every race or nation to protect with shot and shell their selfish interest against all other races or nations even to the sacrificing of millions of innocent lives; he further impresses the poor people that the resurrection of the dead is only for the purpose of heaping further damnation upon the condemned. The Denominations teach the same thing—that God's Kingdom has long been established and that the resurrection of the dead is only for the purpose of issuing to them their damnation.

In conclusion, I beg to say that I know many of you consecrated to the Lord and are willing to give even life for what you believe to be right. But, you have been kept in ignorance of God's great plan of salvation because of false teachings. I trust that you may, from tonight, be able to decide what teachings you will listen to.

My opponent called attention to the fact that the world has not ended. I want to say Pastor Russell told the world thirty some odd years before the great war, that the world would begin to end in 1914, at that time and the world ended; the only trouble with my opponent is that it is just likely it was when the Lord went away; He says in like manner when I go away, the same will I come back. There was not but a few saw Him when He went away and there is only a few that know He is back.

He does not know what the "world" means from a Bible point of view. It means age or dispensation. I want to tell you the world has ended. When Peter said in II. Peter 3:6, "Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished." He did not mean the burning of the same earth as here but meant that order of things which existed sixteen hundred and fifty-six years from the creation of man to the end of the present world, but my opponent does not know it, now. I make this testimony before God and the angels—it is the truth. Pastor Russell told the truth when he said the world would end in 1914—can you not hear and see the rumbling on all sides? In that connection this is all I will say.

I am glad to say, dear ones, that God's promise of establishing a Kingdom here upon earth is now in process of fulfillment. The old order is passing away preparatory to the establishing of the new. When his

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